

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK
RARE BIRD RECORDS
DECEMBER, 2005 - FEBRUARY, 2006

Attached is a list of observations reported by visitors and staff for the period December, 2004 - February, 2005. I've compiled observations for species which are listed as **Sporadic, Rare, Accidental, Hypothetical** or **Not included** (?) on the park's checklist. A "?win" indicates a species which is documented for the park but not in the winter season.

The winter season in Big Bend was generally mild and very dry, with less than an inch of precipitation falling anywhere in the park over the three month period. The last measurable rainfall occurred at the end of January and the dry spell continues at this writing. Cold fronts were few and for the most part did not last more than a few days. A comparison of current precipitation totals through February with the same period last year (+ or -) illustrates the recovery from the early winter dry spell: Panther Junction; 0.56" (-0.95"), Chisos Basin; 0.78" (-0.78"), Rio Grande Village; 0.58" (-0.28"), Castolon; 0.30" (-1.21"), and Persimmon Gap; 0.44" (-1.12").

The annual Christmas Counts (December 28-29) tallied good species totals but far lower individual counts than expected. Food crop conditions were generally poor, and unlike the previous year, sporadically occurring species were low or altogether absent (ash-throated flycatcher, house wren, American robin, sage thrashers, and sage sparrow).

The only review species documented during the period was **Varied Thrush**, with one male reported first on January 17 in the Boot Canyon, and a subsequent observation of two males in the same area on February 2 (photos by Carpenter). The last observation reported was on February 17. The reports here are in line with several other west Texas observations from the Davis and Guadalupe Mountains (Pers. Comm. - Lockwood). Varied thrush was last documented in the park in January 1982.

A female rufous hummingbird found nearly frozen, but still alive, on December 1 during one of the few cold fronts to push through the area was a distressing find. Fortunately the bird was revived and apparently survived to flee the area when warmer temperatures returned the next day. Other winter highlights include white-tailed kite, red-shouldered hawk, short-eared owl, white-eyed vireo, black-throated gray warbler, and a lone male purple finch. Greater yellowlegs and ovenbird reports represent first winter records for the park. Finally, Eurasian collared doves (at least two) were present during the period at Rio Grande Village. Though this exotic has yet to establish a permanent presence in the park, there is a small, but thriving, population just outside the west boundary in Study Butte and Terlingua Springs. Given the presence of a pair at Rio Grande Village, a breeding population in the park is likely only a matter of short time.

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK
RARE BIRD RECORDS
DECEMBER, 2005 - FEBRUARY, 2006

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
Lesser scaup	2m,f	01/31	Rio Grande near Nature Trail	John & Joanne Biddick	rare
	5m,f	02/03-4	RGV-boat ramp	Eric Carpenter	rare
Wild turkey	1f	12/07	Rio Grande near Hot Springs	Sherwood Reid	rare
Least bittern	1m	02/12	RGV-Nature Trail	J*J Biddick	acc.
American bittern	1	12/15-2/07	RGV-Nature Trail	Many observers	rare
Black-crowned Night-heron	1	01/24	RGV-Nature Trail	Carl Lundblad	rare
	1	01/29	RGV-Nature Trail	Greg Levandoski	rare
	1	02/03	RGV-Nature Trail	Eric Carpenter	rare
Turkey vulture	1	12/03	Blue Creek	Rob & Angie Dean	rare
	1	12/29	Rio Grande Vill.	CBC	rare
White-tailed kite	1	02/03	Cattail Falls	Patti Westbrook	acc.
Harris' hawk	1	02/15	Cottonwood Camp.	Mark Flippo	rar.
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	02/28	Takeout near SEC	Greg Levandoski	acc
Greater yellowlegs	1	01/26	Hot Springs	Russell Cheney	?win
	1	02/20	RGV-Nature Trail	Bob Severson	?win
Eurasian Collared Dove	1	01/01	RGV Store area	Mike Lesnik	?win
	1	01/23	RGV group site	Mark Flippo	?win
	2	02/3-4	RGV Store area	Eric Carpenter	?win
	1	02/21	RGV-Daniels Rch.	Mark Flippo	?win
Short-eared owl	1	02/12	Cottonwood Camp.	Bob Severson	acc.
Burrowing owl	1	12/19	N. Rosillos Rd	Jim & Barb Hines	rare
Common poorwill	1	01/24	Cottonwood Camp	T&C Jervis	rare
Anna's Hummingbird	1m	12/01-01/09	Panther Junction	Mark Flippo	rare

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
Rufous Hummingbird	1f	12/01	Panther Junction	Mark Flippo	acc.
Green kingfisher	1m	12/10	RGV-Nature trail	Dan Leavitt	rare
	1m	12/29	CBC-RGV Nature Tr	several observers	rare
	1m	01/24	RGV-nature trail	Daniel Paez	rare
	1m	01/31	RGV-Nature Trail	J&J Biddick	rare
	1m	02/03	RGV-Nature Trail	Eric Carpenter	rare
Gray flycatcher	1-2	01/02-2/28	Cottonwood Camp	many observers	rare
	1	01/12	RGV-Rd to Daniels	Ric & Terry Derdeyn	rare
	1	12/28	CBC-RGV	several observers	rare
	1	01/31	Terlingua Creek	Eric Carpenter	rare
	1	02/19	Rio Grande Vill.	Greg Levandoski	rare
Ash-throated Flycatcher	1	01/25	RGV-Gambusia pond	Greg Levandoski	spo.
White-eyed vireo	1	12/10	RGV-Nature Trail	Dan Leavitt	acc.
Gray vireo	1	01/27	Hot Springs	Stan Riome	rare
	1	02/02	Burro Springs	Eric Carpenter	rare
Violet-green Swallow	2	02/09	RGV-Daniels Rch.	Mark Flippo	early?
Red-breasted Nuthatch	3	01/24	Boot Canyon	Mark Lockwood	spo.
Carolina wren	1	12/23	Santa Elena Cyn	Dan Leavitt	rare
	2	01/21	Santa Elena Cyn	Dan Paez	rare
	1	01/31	Cottonwood Camp	Eric Carpenter	rare
	2	01/31	Terlingua Creek	Eric Carpenter	rare
	1	02/07	Santa Elena Cyn	??	rare
	1	02/22	Santa Elena Cyn	Mark Flippo	rare
Golden-crowned Kinglet	12	12/18	RGV-Daniels Rch	David Elkowitz	spo.

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
Varied Thrush*	1m	01/17	Boot Canyon	Dan Leavitt	acc.
	2m	02/1-2	Boot Canyon	Eric Carpenter	acc.
	1m	02/17	Boot Canyon	Bob Severson	acc.
*Texas Review Species: Reports to Lockwood:TBRC Pending Review					
Gray catbird	1	01/01	Sam Nail Ranch	Cathy Bell	rare
	1	01/11	Sam Nail Ranch	Michele Patenande	rare
	1	01/19	Sam Nail Ranch	Mark Flippo	rare
Sage thrasher	2	12/28	CBC-Chisos	several observers	spo.
	4	12/29	CBC-RGV	several observers	spo.
	6	01/28	Panther Junction	Mark Flippo	spo.
	1	02/22	Sam Nail ranch	Mark Flippo	spo.
Black-throated Gray warbler	1	01/08	RGV-Campground	Cynthia Ryan	acc.
	1m	01/28	CBC-Chisos	several observers	acc.
Ovenbird	1	12/30	Window Trail	Jim & Dede Crusinberry	?win
Clay-colored Sparrow	12	12/28	CBC-Chisos	several observers	spo.
	02	12/29	CBC-RGV	several observers	spo.
	1	01/31	Terlingua Abajo	Eric Carpenter	spo.
Field sparrow	1	12/28	CBC-Chisos	Mark Flippo	spo.
	12	12/29	CBC-RGV	Bryan Hale	spo.
Sage sparrow	1	02/03	Surprise Tank	Greg Levandoski	spo.
	1	0212	Tornillo Creek	Greg Levandoski	spo.
Fox sparrow	3	01/23-24	RGV-Campground	Carl Lundblad	spo
	1	01/31	Terlingua Creek	Eric Carpenter	spo
	4	02/19	Rio Grande Vill.	Greg Levandoski	spo.
	2	02/21	RGV-campground	Mark Flippo	spo.
Varied bunting	3m,f	01/31	Terlingua Creek	Eric Carpenter	spo.
Purple finch	1m	12/29	RGV-Rd to Daniels	Ken Stinnet	acc.